

LET ME BE NOT TOO SURE.

Let me not be of life's longest too sure
 Nor based on a frail tomorrow's light.
 But, answering day's behest, forget its lure,
 Let there shall rise no stars upon my night;
 Nor build upon joy's improvidence
 Nor time's irrevocable coin cast hence,
 However near its full-blown sunset gleam.
 Then, who shall stand guard of crystal tears,
 Let me not spend of gift or grace too soon
 Nor squander any sweet that therein lies,
 But for high service keep the utmost boom,
 Let it shall be too sure or seek to prove
 And break the alabaster box of love!
 —Virginia Woodward Cloud in Harper's Bazar.

AUNT CHARLOTTE'S RESPONSIBILITY.

The Story of a Faithful Slave's Faith in Her Master's Promise to Return.

BY HAYS BLACKMAN.

Beyond the neglected shrubbery, the blackened timbers and the crumbling heap of bricks that marked the place where the big house of the plantation had stood before the war was a small inclosure surrounded by a rail fence.

In the plat were two graves—those of a grown person and a little child. Without the rail fence nature had done her best, hiding the scars of war under a tangle of wild honeysuckle that wrapped the vines of the old mansion in a caressing greenery.

But within the inclosure there was evidence that nature had a helper in her ministry.

The plantation kitchen was a brick building that stood just back of the ruins of the house. From the door the frequent passage of feet had worn a path through the buffalo grass to the rail fence and the top rail of the panel of fence to which the path led was smooth and sagging where an old negress had climbed over it every day for many years.

She stood this morning in the little burying ground. She had been clipping the grass in the inclosure and the graves were covered with roses—white roses of the old fashioned "thousand and one" variety that grew in old gardens. The old woman had brought them from the garden at Captain Terrill's, where Captain Terrill's wife, the new mistress of the plantation, gave her flowers for the graves or provisions for her larder with a beautiful impartiality.

Captain Terrill, riding down the levee road to the field, saw the pathetic figure by the graves and drew rein at the fence.

"Howdy, Aunt Charlotte?" he called. "Your graves look mighty nice this morning."

The old woman straightened her bent back.

"How you come on, Mist' Joe?" she inquired. "You lookin' peart. I see tellable, thank, sub. Yes, sub. de graves moughty fine. Miss Dell gin me de roses fo' Miss Ma'gret's grave dis mawnin'. Miss Dell moughty good to me, Mist' Joe."

The young owner of the plantation smiled and nodded as he touched bay Selim with the whip.

"That's all right, Aunt Charlotte," he called over his shoulder. "You go to your Miss Dell for anything you need."

Aunt Charlotte watched him out of sight beyond the bend in the levee road. She sighed as she turned back to the graves.

"Miss Dell moughty good," she said, stooping to touch a flower on Miss Margaret's grave. "She moughty good, but her an' Mist' Joe ain't my own folkses."

A tear rolled down her withered cheek and fell among the roses.

"Miss Ma'gret," she whispered. "I see lonesome. Miss Ma'gret. Cyan't you ax de good Lord to sen' Marse Cunnel home an tek po' ole Charlotte long er you an ill' Marse John?"

One June morning, just after the desperate struggle to rend the Union asunder began, Colonel Murray rode away from Riverview to join the Confederate forces. From the door of the big house Miss Margaret watched him, and Charlotte held the colonel's little son up in her arms that he might watch the erect figure on the big horse out of sight beyond the bend in the levee road.

"Charlotte," Colonel Murray had said, "I know you are faithful. I leave you Miss Margaret and your little Marse John to your especial care. Until I come home again I will hold you responsible for their welfare."

After her master had ridden away Aunt Charlotte took up her trust. How faithfully she had fulfilled it only Miss Margaret and little Marse John could have told—Miss Margaret and little Marse John who slept beneath the roses.

The colonel had never come back to Riverview. The tide of war swept over the plantation and the soldiers left desolation behind them. When they burned the big house, the flames spared the brick kitchen, that, after the southern fashion, stood at some distance from the main building. And here, while the flames from the house, the outbuildings and the negro cabins in the quarter lit the level delta country for miles, Aunt Charlotte carried her mistress and little Marse John and here she had lived ever since.

The little boy died of a slow fever the last year of the war. Aunt Charlotte herself dug the little grave near the house so that Miss Margaret might still have her boy close to her. Miss Margaret lived till three years after the war, a heartbroken woman, for whom the faithful negress cared tenderly and patiently as for an ailing, fretful child. When at last Charlotte turned from the new grave beside little Marse John's it was to new responsibility—to wait for Marse Cunnel; to keep the graves fresh and green; to give back to him the trust she had kept. She had waited

now for more than 30 years and though to every one else the colonel's name was only a memory Aunt Charlotte still believed that he would come. On the night after Captain Terrill had stopped at the fence on his way to the fields Aunt Charlotte sat by the hearth in the old kitchen. As always, her thoughts were in the past. For her the breeze that blew through the open door, damp and sweet, was heavy with the fragrance of the roses that bloomed by the galleries of the big house 30 years before.

A negro melody broke the stillness of the night. To the old woman the song came from the quarters where long ago the negroes sang on summer nights like this, and the years rolled back to give her again master and mistress and the old care free, irresponsible, happy life.

"We gwine fix dis heah place up w'en Marse Cunnel come home," Aunt Charlotte mused. "Miss Dell say Marse Cunnel daid. She say he ain't nevah gwine come back. Law! Miss Dell ain't know my ole master. 'Miss Dell, I say, 'my Marse Cunnel nevah bruk he wud yit. He done 'low he gwine come back, an be comin'. Moughty long time hit tek 'im. Spec' he done chase dem Yankees dat fur norf dat hit tuk 'im all dis time to git back. But he sho' gwine come. I spec' 'im erlong enny time. Law, law, 'twouldn't 'sprise me none to see Marse Cunnel walk in dat are do' dis bery minnit'—"

In her eagerness she turned to the open door. The words died on her lips. Her jaw dropped, and her face grew gray with fear.

A man stood in the doorway. Behind him the darkness made a frame for his figure, and the fire that flickered on the hearth—kindled there to light the room—showed his ragged clothing, glistened on the tangled white hair that covered his head and the white beard that hung unkempt on his breast. His eyes looked out hungrily from beneath shaggy brows.

He took a step into the room. Aunt Charlotte rose to her feet.

"Is it you, Charlotte?" the stranger said. "Charlotte, where is my wife? Where is the home? Where is your little Marse John? I left them in your care."

The old woman gave one cry of happiness.

"Marse Cunnel," she cried, "my master! Bress Gawd dat you come home. Whut dey do to you, ole marse, dat you look dat ole an po'?"

"I want my wife and child," the man repeated sharply.

The old woman knelt at his feet.

"Marse Cunnel, dey bofe gone dese many yeabs," she said, her tears beginning to fall.

"Gone," he said after her—"both gone?"

"I done de bes' I could, Marse Cunnel," she begged. "Gawd knows dat I kep' dat trust de bes' I could. I kep' de graves moughty nice an green, sub. 'The graves,' this wreck of her old master shouted. 'Dead! Margaret daid! My God!'

He pushed away Aunt Charlotte's despairing hands and rushed out into the night.

"Lawd," Aunt Charlotte whispered, kneeling with upraised hands where her master had left her. "you know dat I done filled dat 'sponsibility de bes' dat I knowed how. O Lawd, you know how I wuk with dem graves an cut de grass and fotch de water an kep' 'em green. Miss Ma'gret, Miss Ma'gret, I see ole an lonesome. De 'sponsibility is ober. Ax Gawd to lemme come erlong, wid you an ill' Marse John."

They found the colonel next morning lying among the faded roses on his wife's grave. And in the old kitchen, on the bed where Miss Margaret had died, Aunt Charlotte lay, her responsibility over, the years of her trust fulfilled.

Three days later, when the keepers of a northern insane asylum came to Riverview in search of an escaped patient who had been an inmate of the institution for more than 30 years, and who had never been able to tell them where was his home and who were his friends, they found two new graves in the plat behind the rail fence.

Master and mistress and faithful servant were united.—St. Louis Republic.

A Successful Ruse.
 Mark Twain once used a successful ruse to attract the attention of President Cleveland to an injustice which he thought was about to be done to Consul General Mason at Frankfurt, one of the best men in the service. Mason was notified that his resignation was expected and that a Mr. Rapp of Illinois was to be his successor. He was packing up his goods when Mark Twain happened around that way and visited the consulate.

Being informed of the situation, the latter wrote a letter to Ruth Cleveland, the baby daughter of the president, telling her that he could not interfere in matters of patronage because he was a Mugwump, but he considered it a shame that a man of experience and ability like Consul General Mason should be turned out of office simply because some Democrat who knew nothing about its duties wanted the place. He said that he was acquainted with a great many consuls and that Captain Mason was the best he had ever known, and if her father ever consulted her about the consular service he suggested that she advise him not to disturb good men merely to give places to politicians.

About a month later Mr. Clemens received a little note in President Cleveland's handwriting, in which Miss Ruth Cleveland presented her compliments to Mark Twain, thanked him for calling attention to the threatened removal of Consul Mason and said that if he knew of any similar cases the president would be glad to hear from him.

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CHILD LOVE.
 Two little arms were clinging,
 And a little head was pressed
 (The way face all hidden)
 Closely against my breast.
 "What is it, dear?" I questioned,
 Charming the golden hair,
 Whispering sweetly and shyly,
 "I love you!" the darling said.
 What had I given to win it—
 This offering pure and sweet?
 A story told in the twilight,
 A merry word when we meet?
 Oh, child love, so gladly offered,
 So easily won, I pray
 Through life I may find this treasure
 Mine, as it is today!
 There are trials to meet and vanquish
 And sorrows crowned with the years,
 And lips curve less to smiling,
 And eyes fill oft with tears,
 But the heavy heart grows lighter,
 Half of its grief beguiled,
 When love, with a heaven-born impulse,
 Speaks from the lips of a child!
 —Home Notes.

COUNTERFEIT ART.
 Americans Are Easily Swindled on Pictures by "Old Masters."
 There will doubtless never come a time in the history of the art world when the discovery of "old masters" will cease, certainly not as long as American picture buyers possess the almighty dollar and are willing to be swindled.
 Nearly every week in New York for the last year there have been auction sales of "rare old masters." Some of them are rare, indeed; one that was shown at the Macbeth gallery and also in Detroit some time ago, supposed to be a study of an old man by Rubens, the left hand of which was nearly twice the size of its mate, and the term "rare" did certainly, apply very aptly to the flesh tints.
 Do people ever stop to think how many of these "old masters" there are in existence? Any one may have an "old master" these days who has the "price" to pay the dealer to find one or go abroad and get one "made." There are many artists in Paris and elsewhere who make a good living, or what they consider a good living, copying "old masters" in the various galleries to sell to dealers for little or nothing, and they in turn bring them to America and clear hundreds by selling them to some moneyed art lover who in some cases is doubtless in the possession of more money than judgment in art matters.
 One well known New York art collector some time ago paid a large sum for a "certain painting that an enterprising dealer had "discovered" and who represented it to him as very rare and the only one in existence. The same gentleman while on a recent tour through Spain was shown the original painting upon the walls of a certain monastery. The sequel of the story does not say what he did with the dealer. If there be a hereafter for these discoverers of "old masters," their consciences, which seem very elastic, will have to do a deal of rubbing to get back to the required shape or to meet the frowns of the shades of departed masters themselves.—Detroit News Tribune.

A Boasting Epitaph.
 The following epitaph is to be found in Dalketh churchyard, over the grave of Margaret Scott:
 Stop, passengers, until my life you read.
 The living may get knowledge by the dead.
 Five times five years I lived a maiden's life;
 Ten times five years I lived a widow's life;
 Now, weary of this mortal life, I rest.
 Between my cradle and my grave have been
 Eight mighty kings of Scotland and a queen.
 Four times five years the commonwealth I saw;
 Ten times the subjects rose against the law.
 Twice did I see old England pulled down,
 And twice the clock was humbled by the town.
 An end of Stewart's race I saw; nay, more,
 My native country sold for English ore.
 Such decisions in my life have been;
 I have an end of all perfection seen.
 This lady was born in 1613 and lived to the age of 125 and, therefore, must have lived through the following list of rulers: James I., Charles I., the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell as protector, Charles II., James II., William III and Mary, Anne, George I and George II.—London Chronicle.

Methods of Curing Jungle Fever.
 I got over my attack, but it was a marvel that I did. One morning my doctor bled me till there was scarcely a drop of blood left in my body. He then gave me 40 grains of calomel, and in the evening, as the fever was still raging, he ordered me to be taken out to the yard of my quarters, laid on a bare rattan couch and buckets of cold water thrown over me for about 20 minutes! I was then put back to bed and fortunately fell asleep for several hours. After some weeks on the sick list, I was able to return to my post at "Kornegalle."—Fifty Years in Ceylon.

Disappointed the Farmer.
 "That city man that was visiting me is an overrated cuss," remarked the farmer.
 "How so?"
 "Oh, the papers all said he was a kiss without a mustache like an egg without salt. Is that so?"
 "She-Well, really, I don't know. I can't tell for you see, I've never—"
 "He-Ab, now!"
 "She-Well, never eaten an egg without salt.—Glasgow Times.

In the fourteenth century the slaughter of women and children after a town or castle had been taken by storm was one of the most common occurrences of war.
 The first Rhine steamer made its trips from Rotterdam to Cologne in 1816.

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